

In Coney's Wonderlands

The Cities of Illusions They Call
Luna Park and Dreamland.

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The names are suggestive of beautiful white stillness and soft music and shadowy shapes, too intangible for the material world. But the New Yorker's idea of Dreamland and of Coney Island's Moon Park is different.

When the Manhattanite goes to Dreamland he wants to dash along, a mile at a breath, on a railway that takes you feet first, to be told by a palmist that he will be hanged in less than five years, or to see a lion bite off a tiger's head. Something exciting and lively for him.

If you don't believe that is what he wants, just watch him go in crowds and battalions and see the expressions of delight chase themselves over his face as he is shaken up and shaken down, fooled, laughed at,



STRENUOUS LIFE OF THE HINDU PRIEST.

thrilled, startled, surprised and sent home empty in pocket and dislocated in body, his mind in the chaotic state of one who grasps at shadows believing them real.

They print a paper in Luna Park called the *Evening Star*. It should be called the *Gasps*. It is supposed to represent the day's doings, and they can all be contained in that one word.

Said the ticket chopper: "Punched for \$6,000 of 'em yesterday."

"Em" are the Dreamlanders and Luna-

trons. Just before reaching the outfield of the

place a mass of huge derricks and excavating machines rise in the air to an awe-

impelling height. The woman on the rear

seat watched the huge machine swing

back and forth. Then she announced her

intentions:

"You don't catch me riding on any of

them things! Not if I know myself, and I

think I do."

Her companion was a man, and a man

always knows about all machinery.

"Huh!" he looked about apprehen-

sively. "That's a machine for lifting

stone. You don't have to go up in it."

The woman breathed more freely.

"Well, anyway, Maggie told me about

something that—"

"Yes, that's in Luna Park."

You arrive in Dreamland and you leave

Luna Park to music. There is music in

the air, as they used to sing, and there's

music in every other place. The air has no

monopoly.

There are tom-toms and orchestras; there

are trumpets and concertinas; there are

pianos and harps and concatenations of

melodious sounds; there are drums and

fifes and the beating of the surf on the

piers and the bass roar of imprisoned ani-

mals. There is the soul stirring sound of

the barker's megaphones, and a mysterious

undercurrent of harmonies which meet

and blend with the rest to increase the

volume.

Scientists say that no sound is ever lost.

Once released it travels on and on through

eternity. This mysterious addition to the

many noises must be the ghost of the

pianos that were burned at Atlantic City

a few weeks ago. No human agency could

ever, even with all the appliances on hand,

produce such an uninterrupted volume.

And, speaking of eternity—

A corpulent gentleman who got entangled

in one of the turnstiles stood for a moment

without any attempt to extricate himself

while he continued his conversation with

his companion:

"Must bring wife down. She'll love this

place. Whenever she opens her Bible she

always reads that verse with so much

pleasure—that one, you know, about there

being many mansions. I tell her she'll try

'em all before eternity's through. We've

moved six times in two years. Next time

she gets the moving fever, down she comes

here. I tell her to go through all these

places and I start her going through all these

close, don't it?"

Outside Bostock's the gentlemanly barker

is saying:

"Walk in, ladies and gentlemen. See the

only living Cestairre from Loforden. It is

6 feet from the tip of its nose to the tip

of its tail, and 6 feet from the tip of its

tail to the tip of its nose, making in all,

ladies and gentlemen, a length of twelve

feet. Walk in."

The visitors walk in. "What we want

to know," they told the official who ex-

amined their ticket, "is whether anything

funny has happened here. To keep up

the New York idea of what Moonland and

Dreamland should be, it must be funny."

"There's only one funny thing I know,"

said the official, who wore an outfit shirt

striped with tiger-like bands. "Bonnie

got bit by a rattlesnake."

One's idea of fun in Dreamland is dif-

ferent from what it is in real life, but even

management be it said that up to date all

heads are on. But there are numerous

tragic stories of "How he almost did it

yesterday," or "They say that something'll

be done to-day."

"There's lots of tragedy about a place

like this," said the official. "You're just

stepping on it all the time."

"Now, even the monkeys. You'd think

if there was a place free from tragedy it'd

be the monkey cage. But there's one monkey

there who simply can't stand it to see a

man put his hand on a woman. When the

crowd gathers about the cage, if that

monkey sees a man touch a woman's

shoulder he shrieks and yells and beats

the bars and carries on something awful."

A disappointed crowd goes out every day

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DREAMLAND ON THE LAST BOAT.

in Dreamland the sense of humor seems

to be rather topsy turvy.

"Yep," continues the official. "Had to

swallow about a quart of whiskey be-

fore they could cure him. There's a great

demand for those rattlesnake positions

on the staff here. Almost got one my-

self and then something happened. But,

optimistically, 'my turn'll come.'

The optimism was replaced by a touch

of gloom.

"Maxey got bit by a python yesterday!"

"Whiskey?"

"Nope. You see that's where the tragedy

comes in. You don't have to take whiskey

for a python bite; there ain't no poison

in it—just the flesh wound; whiskey ain't

any good."

"Now, I ask you, ain't that just some

fellars' luck? Work around among snakes

for months, and when you do get bitten

it's an old python instead of a rattler.

Makes me think sometimes this animal

work's too strenuous for me."

It might be for him, but it certainly is

not for one of the animal workers. He is

a Hindu imported without duty. He sits

on his heels and the air, hour after hour,

brushing off flies from the sacred bull.

At least one fly alights an hour.

The sacred bull might be called the

scarred bull, and there are few who would

dispute the change in spelling. He is

like an elongated Mexican dog, hairless

and pink, and is covered with a cinemat-

ographic representation of immovable pic-

tures, which an old gentleman in spec-

ties, frock coat and bow tie gestures

said represented scenes in the life of the

"goddess" Siva. Nobody disputed him.

An old lady on the other side explained

the modus operandi.

"They do it with an electric needle, poke

it in like they tattoo mermaid pictures on

people's arms. It hurts terrible while they're

doing it, but it'll last forever."

The official who took the visitors about

an enclosure lined with wild animals that

nobody wants to know, called a young

leopard and explained that he was a fierce

beast; that he had killed two young lions,

his playmates, and attacked a third. The

visitors acknowledged that even a poet,

if poked continually in the ribs with a sharp

pointed stick, might favour a couple of

comparable lions.

In an adjoining cage two baby leopards

change their spots from the floor of the

enclosure to the visitors' arms while the

guide explains that the trainer is a wonder-

ful woman.

"If you could just listen to her talk!

It's a mixture of French and leopard talk."

"The kind that they teach at the School

of Languages?" was asked. And the guide

said, "Maybe."

The animal show is a great attraction.

Everybody goes in extra time because



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